

CHANDAMAMA

JULY 1979

Rs. 1.25



Turn to Page 14
for the story of



To celebrate the International Year of the Child '79

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present their first ever

Children's Needlework Contest




How to enter :

This elephant design shown above is printed in the actual size in the Contest Entry Form. You may work this design or any other design of your choice in a minimum size of 12 cms x 12 cms. in embroidery, knitting, crochet, tatting, applique work or handcraft. All needlework should be done with Modithread only. Entries will be judged on neatness, beauty of design, colour combination, and stitches used. Each entry must be accompanied by the correctly filled Contest Entry Coupon and the labels of the Modithread used. Contest Entry Coupon and Rules

In every territory, prizes will be awarded separately for two age groups:

Age group 6 to 11 years:

Grand National Prize Chic Modithread Scholarship worth Rs. 1000/- and "Needlework Young Princess 1979 Trophy" plus a  **Chic Modithread** hamper of dresses, toys and nursery furniture worth Rs. 1000/-.

Ten 1st Prizes  **Chic Modithread** hampers of dresses, toys and nursery furniture. Each hamper worth Rs. 500/-.

Ten 2nd Prizes Sets of dresses from **Chic Creations**. Each set worth Rs. 200/-.

Ten 3rd Prizes Each worth Rs. 100/-.

Gift hampers of **Johnson's Baby Powder**, **Johnson's baby soap** and **Johnson's baby cream**. • Trade Mark

100 Merit Prizes Sets of Children's books from U.S.S.R. Book Centre and Lok Vangmaya Griha (Pvt.) Ltd., Bombay. Each set worth Rs. 20/-.

100 Consolation Prizes S.N.P.


FUN-N-COLOUR Painting Kits worth Rs. 17/- each.


and Regulations are available at all Modithread dealers, Modithread Craftshops, Modithread Depots and distributors, in Chic magazine issues of April, May, June and July 1979.

Many chances to win!

The country and the contest have been divided into 10 territories with 546 prizes in each territory. The first prize winning entries of each territory will be judged for the Grand National Prizes. Send in your entry to the Modithread Depot in your territory, the address of which is given in the Rules and Regulations.

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First 500 entries in each of the ten territories will receive a Duraflex Plastic book jacket.

Read Chic Cherub—the special children's section in Chic magazine. For contest details write to Chic Publications, Akash Ganga, 89, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Bombay 400036.

Hurry! Contest ends 31st July 1979.

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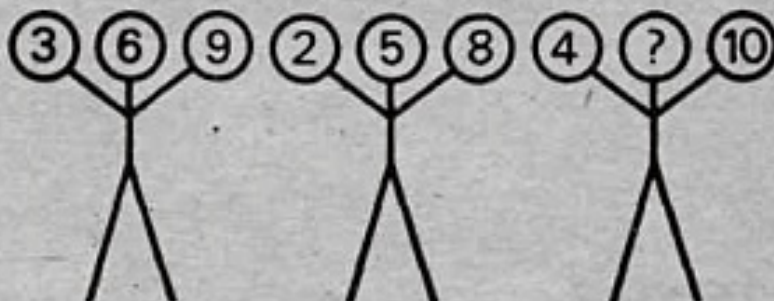
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1st Prize: A. L. Sattyanagendra, Arasikere. **2nd Prize:** V. Anuradha, Bombay. **3rd Prize:** Anil D. Golani, Bombay. **Consolation Prizes:** M. V. R. Krishnakumar, Lucknow; Amit Chatterjee, Lucknow; M. Rajender Naidu, Hyderabad; Viswanath S. Jathan, Bombay; T. Nagaswari Thiagarajan, Arakkonam.

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ENJOY IN THIS ISSUE

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FROM EAST AND WEST

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GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

अङ्गणवेदी वसुधा कुल्या जलधिः स्थली च पातालम् ।

वल्मीकश्च सुमेरुः कृतप्रतिज्ञस्य धीरस्य ॥१॥

Anganavedi vasudhā kulyā jaladhiḥ sthālī ca pātālam

Valmikaśca sumeruḥ kṛtapratijñasya dhīrasya

To a resolute man determined to achieve his goal, the earth
is no greater than a stage in his courtyard, the ocean no vaster
than a pool, the nether-world no different from the land,
Mount Sumeru no bigger than the ant-hill.

— *The Harshacharitam*

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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 10

JULY, 1979

No. 1

Founder : CHAKRAPANI

A BOUQUET FOR YOU

Your magazine feels a thrill when, with this issue, it steps into the 10th Year of Publication. You can surely appreciate the special nature of the thrill, for, this is the International Year of the Child. We have no doubt that numerous loving hearts all over India and beyond are sharing this thrill. We can feel the ripples of smiles all around us - tender and beautiful.

As promised, this issue brings to you a bouquet of tales from various lands. Even a cursory reading should tell you that they have been selected with great care, to give you a taste of purposeful variety. Each tale is significant. While the Chinese tale gives a pitiable example of human greed, the Burmese tale shows how the mode of speech was important even in old old days, so on and so forth. Each tale has a message. It is rather curious that the exchange of stories among the countries of the East is less than the exchange between East and West. But, in our selection, we are happy to be able to give the bigger share to the East.

In this auspicious year and on this auspicious occasion, we wish you best.

David and

Long long ago the land of Israel was attacked by a tribe known as the Philistines. Saul, the King of Israel, was worried about the invaders who were ruthless.

One of the leaders of the Philistines was Goliath—a 12-foot-tall giant of a man.

He was extremely proud of his strength and, perhaps, he loved to see people cowering away from him.

“Listen, O Israelites, send one of your heroes to confront me. If he wins, we Philistines become your slaves. If I win, you serve us as our slaves. Come on!” announced Goliath taking position on a hill.

Israelites heard him. The news reached King Saul. But he knew that to send a single man to face Goliath meant to send the man to a futile death.

Goliath would stand atop the hill and repeat his challenge.



INTERNATIONAL

Goliath



When nobody would take it up, he would laugh derisively and go away.

One day, before the echo of his laughter had died down, he saw a boy climbing up the hill.

"Hey, who are you?" he asked with contempt.

"I'm David. I'm here to fight you," replied the boy.

Goliath felt amused and insulted. He drew his huge sword and whirled it and was about to rush at the boy.

Suddenly the boy brought out a sling and shot a small stone at Goliath. It hit him on the head. He fell down, dead!

There was great excitement among the Israelites. David, who was a singer in King Saul's court, became a hero. Later he married Saul's daughter and after Saul and Saul's son died in a battle, he became the king of Israel.

YEAR OF THE CHILD '79

The Prince and the Wizard

(The wizard returns to life and arrives in the city on the eve of Badal's marriage with Princess Pratiba. He contacts the disgruntled Samser and through him takes possession of the magic bell. Next, he whisks away Badal's magic castle and the princess. He proposes to marry the princess. When he sees that she is still hopeful of Badal coming to her rescue, he brings Badal down there, reduced to a helpless prisoner.)

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At midnight Ramu felt someone shaking him. He opened his eyes half. It was still dark. Sure that Badal was trying to wake him up, he said, "I am afraid, dawn is still an hour or two away. Let us relax a while more, dear friend!"

But hardly had he closed his eyes when a chubby palm gave him another thorough shake.

Ramu got suspicious and opened his eyes wide. Beside him stood a large bear, perhaps in a mood to cultivate friendship with him.

Ramu sprang up and got down from the rock. The bear growled, disappointed at his conduct and left the place.

In the moonlight, Ramu looked for Badal. Had Badal slipped down the rock? Ramu circled the rock several times. Then he climbed a tree and

surveyed the area around. Badal was not to be seen.

Ramu called out his friend's name. The volume of his voice was on the increase with every call till it cracked. But no response came except from a few birds and beasts whose peace he had disturbed.

Ramu felt like weeping. He was sure, his friend would not desert him under any circumstance. Also, Badal was too smart for any beast to carry him away. His disappearance must have been caused by the very wicked power responsible for the disappearance of the princess and the castle.

Overwhelmed by a sense of dejection, Ramu loitered around. Suddenly he was attracted by the neighing of a horse. It was not usual for a horse to neigh about in the forest at

that hour of the night. He followed the sound and advanced a few steps before he saw the horse. It was perhaps the horse who saw him first. It came trotting near him as if it knew him pretty well.

Surprised, Ramu went nearer the horse and fondled it. The horse seemed to give him a mild push in a certain direction.

He realised that the creature was drawing his attention towards something. He let the horse guide him.

A furlong away there was yet another mountain stream. As they came near it, the horse gave out another neigh and crouched near a slab of stone. Only then Ramu observed that leaning against the slab sat a man.

Could it be Badal? Ramu grew hopeful for a second. But soon he knew that his was a misplaced hope.

"Don't you remember me?" the stranger asked in a tired voice.

Ramu sat down. He recognised the man more by his voice than by his appearance. He was the traveller whose horse they had rescued from Samser. Ramu remembered him with affection, for it was he who had



presented Badal with the magic ring of love.

"Why are you lying here in this condition?" asked Ramu, after fetching some water for him from the stream, in a cupped leaf.

"That is a long story. Know this much for the moment that this horse of mine is endowed with a sixth sense. That is why I valued it so much. I was in search of two precious objects. My horse knew the cave in which they lay and it led me there all right. But little did I know that the place was guarded by a horde of goblins. I was a fool to try my strength against



them. They would have killed me but for my clever horse," explained the traveller.

"What are the objects you were looking for?" asked Ramu.

"A pair of sandals and a shawl. The sandals could carry one anywhere one liked, in the twinkling of an eye. Wrapped up by the shawl, one could grow invisible," revealed the traveller.

"Only if we could lay our hands on them at this hour of crisis!" exclaimed Ramu. He told the traveller in brief all that had befallen Badal.

"The goblins are ferocious-but they don't have much

intelligence. If you could somehow outwit them..."

"Let me try," said Ramu in great eagerness. The traveller told him where the cave was situated. It was decided that the traveller, after recovering his strength, should proceed to the city and await them.

"If I succeed, we meet there, if not, farewell, Sir," said Ramu.

In half an hour Ramu was near the dark yawning cave. He could hear some heated exchange going on inside the cave in a nasal accent.

He crawled stealthily through the hedges and, with great attention, heard what was going on. Soon he understood that two leading goblins were quarrelling over the ownership of the magic property.

"It is I who gave that fellow a punch and saved the property," claimed one.

"It is not your punch but my pinch that drove him away," rebuffed the other.

"O O O! how to solve the tangle?" both the goblins lamented. "Let us go to our king."

"Why! I can solve it for you!" announced Ramu, springing up between the two contenders.

The goblins were taken aback.

Ramu knew that he must slip away as soon as possible.

"Don't stare like idiots. You wished a solution. Your king sent me to help you. And all you do is keep mum! Should I then go back?" Ramu threatened.

"Please wait," said the goblins entreatingly. "Here are the sandals and the shawl. Tell us who should own them, the puncher or the pincher!"

"But are you sure they have not lost their magic quality because of your quarrel?" uttered Ramu, while putting on the sandals and covering himself with the shawl as if to try them. Next moment he grew invisible. Before the goblins had suspected his motive, he had asked the magic sandals to carry him wherever Badal was.

The goblins looked agape for a long time and then called out, "Hellow, king's messenger! Aren't you still satisfied that the stuff have their power intact?" When there was no response, they began quarrelling afresh as to who between them had been



the first to be deceived by the stranger.

Ramu saw himself passing through layers of cloud. The darkness was slowly giving way to twilight. From high he could soon see Badal's charming castle resting in a vale, ringed by hills. The whole area looked enchanted. He found himself being led into the castle by the magic sandals, although none could see him in that process.

To conclude in the next issue

THE PRINCE AND THE WIZARD is adapted from the popular movie, *Patal Bairavi*, the property of M/s. VIJAYA PRODUCTIONS PRIVATE LTD., Madras. Reproduction or imitation, in part or in full, in any manner and in any language, is strictly prohibited.



A Tale from Persia

Adventure In the Desert

In days gone by people crossed the desert always in large groups. It was because there were gangs of bandits on the prowl for helpless travellers.

Shem, a poor villager, once decided to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He found two other villagers to accompany him. But only three persons could hardly stand against any attack. That is why they followed a caravan of merchants which was on its way to Mecca.

The leader of the caravan took a liking for the witty and good-natured Shem. Shem's travel was smooth.

But one day Shem and his two companions were still asleep

when the caravan resumed its journey early in the morning. The people of the caravan had just forgotten them.

On waking up, the travellers walked as fast as they could to catch up with the caravan. But they had not gone far when a young bandit, riding a horse, confronted them with his long sword.

Now, this young bandit was a terror in the desert. He was as swift as breeze and as cruel as a monster. He was extremely proud of the speed with which he could strike his victims dead.

He made a lightning movement of his sword and all the three travellers fell. He laughed

and got off his horse, and throwing his sword on the ground, began to reach the dead travellers for money.

Shem's companions had indeed been killed, but not Shem. He had sprawled on the ground before the bandit's sword had reached him, after cutting down the other two. The bandit did not know that he was alive.

Shem suddenly picked up the bandit's sword and drove it through him, killing him instantly. Then he rode the horse, but did not know where to go.

The horse rambled about for a while and then galloped on. Shem did not stop it. By evening it reached an oasis. Under a few palm trees and beside a narrow stream there were some houses.

The people of the oasis came out at the sight of the horse. They looked in surprise at Shem.

Shem realised that they were the kinsmen of the young bandit whom he killed. He knew that he was in great danger. However, he managed to remain calm.

The chief of the tribe came forward and demanded to know what happened to the owner of the horse.

"O good man! the rider of



this horse, a brave lad, charged at a party of pilgrims. He killed some, but was captured. He would have been killed, but he offered to pay money in exchange for his life. The price fixed for his life is one lakh dinars. He said that if someone would report his misfortune to his kinsmen, the price would be paid. He further said that the horse would lead the messenger to his village. But who would dare to visit a bandit's den? The young man was about to be put to death. But I took pity on him and came here," said Shem.

The people looked at one

another. They could not dismiss Shem's story easily. The life of their bravest young man was at stake. At the same time, they were not prepared to hand over one lakh dinars to a stranger.

"Don't just hand over the money to me. Come with me. Pay the amount to our leader and take delivery of the prisoner," proposed Shem.

Shem was entertained to sumptuous dishes. Early in the morning ten hefty fellows followed him with the money.

Shem spotted the caravan after two days. He asked the ten riders to stop.

"Let me go and inform the leader about your arrival. Otherwise they might take us as a gang of bandits and attack us,"

he said.

Then he went forward alone and informed the caravan what had happened. All were thrilled at his adventure. Shem signaled the ten fellows to come closer. They greeted the leader and handed over the amount.

Instantly they were taken prisoner. "Let them be killed," shouted the leader.

"Please spare them their lives," pleaded Shem. The leader agreed to do so. The ten fellows lost their horses to the caravan and had to return to their oasis bare-footed and broken-hearted. We don't know when they reached the oasis or if they reached at all.

Shem kept the money and let the horses be owned by the leader of the caravan.



A FIRE IN THE FOREST

The forest of Sonbon seethed under a blazing summer sun. However, Mintoo and Meena hardly felt it, for they knew how to swing through the hot hours!



A furlong behind them stood a barren hill. A huge boulder rolled down it and crashed on the stones below. A spark was born.



At once the tall dry grass at the foot of the hill caught fire and the fire spread towards the hut of Meena's parents.

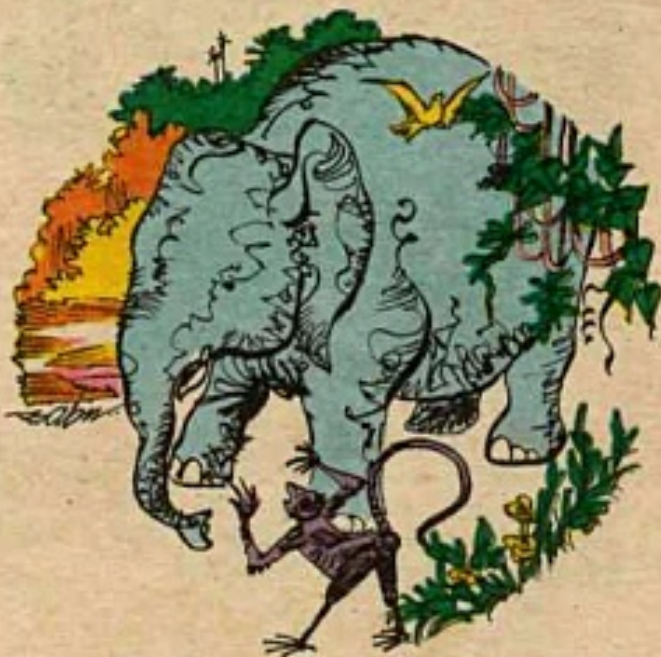


Mintoo and Meena climbed a tree and saw the menacing fire. They shouted out warnings to Meena's parents.





Next, all of them tried to extinguish the fire by throwing at it water brought from the river. But it was of no avail.



Jhandoo hopped from tree to tree and met the baby elephant and gibbered out the news. The baby elephant understood.



The baby elephant began trumpeting, attracting the entire horde of elephants. They all trooped forward to the scene.

They reached the river and sucked water into their trunks and then began disgorging them on the fire. The fire was extinguished.



NEXT: BARGAIN WITH A BEAR



A Folktale from Russia

GREATER FOOLS FOUND!

By the side of the forest lived a clever young man and his innocent wife. One evening while the young man was out for gathering wood, a fellow came shivering for cold and sat down near the fire which the lady was raking.

"Wherefrom do you come?" asked the innocent young lady.

"From heaven!" replied the fellow who was a cheat.

"I had never met a traveller from heaven earlier. Well, my father died a few months ago. I wonder if he is somewhere in heaven," mused the lady.

"He is. In fact we share the same room," said the cheat.

"How wonderful! How is he?"

"He is fine, but it is awfully cold up there in heaven. He

yearns for a coat," replied the cheat.

"My heart breaks at the thought of my poor father shivering for cold. Will you mind taking my husband's coat and giving it to him?" asked the lady imploringly.

"I don't mind!" replied the cheat.

The lady handed over her husband's coat to the fellow and he left with a chuckle.

A little later arrived the husband.

"I know you'd be the last person to feel the loss of your coat when you know that your poor father-in-law is enjoying its comfort in heaven," said the young lady.

When the young man heard what had happened to his coat,



he sighed and said, "My dear wife, you are such a fool that I find it extremely difficult to live with you!"

"You are not thinking of deserting me, are you?" asked the wife, in tears.

"I am not thinking, but I am deserting you. I shall be back only if I meet a greater fool!" said the young man and he went out in a huff.

It was a moonlit night. He walked the whole night and was at the other end of the forest by morning. Before long his eyes fell on the cheat wearing his coat, entering a house.

He waited behind a tree.

When he saw the cheat going out, without the coat, he went closer to the house. A pig was roaming about in front of the house. He bowed to the pig in full view of the lady of the house.

"What are you doing, stranger?" asked the lady, quite amused.

"This one resembles my wife's long lost brother. Who knows if he has not changed into this pig? Do I have your permission to lead him to my home for an hour or so for my wife to talk to him?" said the young man, feigning complete innocence.

The lady paused and laughed. "Who can dream of a fool like this one!" she thought and then asked, "How far is your home?"

"If I scream, my wife would scream back," replied the young man.

The lady thought, "That means the fellow lives close by. Let him take the pig. There will be such an excitement when his wife would see her 'brother'. I shall follow him and enjoy the fun."

To the young man, she said, "Your brother-in-law should not visit your house without any cloth." She then brought

out the very coat her husband had left a moment ago, and threw it on the pig.

"If you so desire, you can carry your dear brother-in-law in our horse-carriage," said the lady.

"My wife will feel so flattered!" said the young man.

The pig was made to ride the carriage. The young man drove it away.

The lady was still in a laughing fit when her husband, the cheat, came back. He stood speechless with anger upon hearing what his wife had done. "You are the greatest fool I've ever known," he cried out and then began running after the

young man. "I shall be back only if I find a greater fool than yourself," he shouted at his wife.

The young man had expected this. He led the carriage into the forest, off the road, and fastened it to a tree and sat by the roadside with his hat resting on the ground.

A little later the cheat arrived there, gasping for breath.

"Fellow, have you seen a young man driving a carriage?" asked the cheat.

"With a pig wearing a coat in it?"

"Right. How far do you think he has gone?"

"He was going pretty fast. It



should take me half an hour to catch him, a champion runner though I am, if I pursue him!"

"He has stolen away my carriage and my pig—and er—er—even my coat! If you could catch him, either the pig or the coat will be yours!"

"But how can I leave the hat here?"

"Take it with you, by all means!"

"How can I? Does it not belong to my master? And has he not ordered me to guard it here because a golden bird is trapped in it? Has he not said that I should not leave the spot even if someone offered me ten coins?"

"If I offer twenty coins and also guard the bird?" asked the cheat and he handed out twenty coins to the young man.

"Then I run," said the young

man and he ran away. Needless to say, he went into the forest and drove the horse-carriage home, along with the pig and the coat.

"I am back because I found a greater fool than yourself in the wife of the fellow who had swindled you of my coat," he announced.

The cheat kept guard on the hat for a long time. He expected either the young man or his master to come there. But when nobody turned up, he slowly lifted the hat. He found no bird under it! The hat itself was a rotten one, worth nothing.

He knocked at the door of his house late in the afternoon.

"I am back because I found a greater fool than yourself. That is myself," he said when his wife opened the door.



The gate of the ancient city of Cairo was guarded by an officer called the Mukaddam. When it would grow dark, he would lock the gate and return home. That was the practice.

One evening, he had just finished offering his prayer to the Almighty, a small purse fell before him. He picked it up and opened it and saw in it a hundred gold coins.

He looked in all directions, but saw not a soul. "What am I to do with the money?" he asked himself. Before long he

answered himself, "I'd be a fool to leave it here." And happily he took the purse home.

A purse with yet another hundred gold coins fell again the next evening. But this time the incident was followed by a giggle. And slowly a beautiful face emerged from a hiding.

"So, it is you who have been throwing money-purses! But why?" asked the surprised Mukaddam.

"Frankly, for a favour from you," replied the charming young lady. Then she said, "When





you would pass the Kazi's home at night tomorrow, you will see me lying in a drunken state before the Kazi's door. Please call the guards and hand me over to them."

"Even if I don't call them, they will find you and lead you to the city watch-house. Must you give me money for just calling the guards?" asked the Mukaddam.

"My dear sir, when the guards would propose to lead me to the city watch-house, you have to warn them against doing so, pointing at the costly clothes on my person. You should advise them to leave me in the

Kazi's custody till my identity had been established. You can tell them that I might be the daughter of a noble house," explained the young lady.

"Hm!" the Mukaddam seemed uncertain. "For this much of your trouble, your profit will be three hundred coins more," assured the lady with a bewitching smile.

The Mukaddam made up his mind at once. "Let it be so," he said.

It happened exactly as planned. The Mukaddam found the lady sprawling in front of the Kazi's mansion and shouted for the guards. Several of them came running there. They brought torches and lamps and were amazed to see the lady lying in that condition.

"She is drunk," commented the Mukaddam. "Right. Let us drag her to the watch-house," proposed a guard.

"Do so only if you wish to lose your head in the morning. Don't you see her glittering raiment and the dazzling necklace? I won't be surprised if she were found to be a princess! Carry her to the watch-house, eh?" said the Mukaddam.

"Er-er-what are we to do with her then?" asked the

guards.

"Why! Let her be left in the Kazi's custody," advised the Mukaddam.

The Kazi had already come out, attracted by their arguments. The Mukaddam related to him the situation and suggested that the lady be given place in his home for the night.

The Kazi found the suggestion sensible. May be, she comes of a famous house. By giving her protection, he might earn a reward. To feel safe, he led the lady into a room that was adjacent to his bedroom. It was in that room that he had hoarded most of his ill-earned wealth.

"She is not likely to regain sense before morning," he thought and went to sleep.

In the morning, pushing open the door of the lady's room, he found that not only she was missing, but also all his wealth!

He scratched his head and pulled his beard and groaned in anguish. Then he shouted for his guards and asked them to summon the Mukaddam.

When the Mukaddam was produced before him hours later, he screamed at him, "You advised me to lodge that lady in my home and she stole away all



I had. You deserve to be put to death!"

The Mukaddam was panicky. With tears in his eyes, he pleaded with him to be allowed a week's time and if he could not get the lady arrested, he would be ready to die.

The night before the dawn of the seventh day, while passing through a dark lane, he heard a familiar voice calling him, "O Sir, Mukaddam!"

He stopped. The lady walked up to him. But the Mukaddam had grown too weak to take hold of her.

"Don't dream of capturing me. I have my followers hiding

here. The Kazi had unjustly usurped my father's property. So I burgled his house. His mansion is heavily guarded day and night. I could not have gained entry without your help!" she said thankfully.

"But I am going to die for helping you," murmured the Mukaddam.

"He cannot kill you. You are the Sultan's officer. The Sultan has to approve of the sentence the Kazi would pass on you," said the lady and she told him what he should do. She gave him a fat bag full of money.

The Mukaddam took some fellow-officers with him and met the Kazi in the morning.

"I have searched the whole city. I did not find the lady. You can pass death sentence on me if you so please. But I'd like to request the Sultan to search your house and compound thoroughly. The lady could not have dissolved into the air. If she is not anywhere else, I am afraid, she is here, if not alive, dead!" declared the Mukaddam.

The Kazi scratched his head and pulled his beard again. He knew that a search would not show the lady, but would reveal a lot of other things. He had many a skeleton in his cupboard!

"Go away!" he shouted. The Mukaddam obeyed him smartly.



The Game for the Bridegroom

Once a couple of young elephants, one male and the other female, went out on a long journey, to see the wide-wide world. They left their own forest far behind and entered another much bigger forest beyond a range of hills.

They were thrilled to see the new world. There were plenty of green vegetables to eat and excellent lakes to bathe in. There were fresh springs from which they were delighted to

drink.

One evening they reached a valley. The cow-elephant was quite tired. She relaxed near a lake.

"Let me see if this place is safe enough for us," said the bull-elephant. He then went to make a survey of the valley.

The valley was the home of a horde of elephants. Their leader, an old elephant, spied upon the cow-elephant.

"This one does not belong to



this forest. She is certainly the most beautiful cow-elephant I have ever seen. Let me marry her," the leader-elephant told the members of his horde.

The cow-elephant was scared at the proposal. But she had the common-sense to understand that the old elephant was a tyrant and it would be dangerous to quarrel with him. She waited patiently.

Soon it was night. The elephants fell asleep. The cow-elephant saw her mate returning to her. She went near him and forbade him to come closer to the horde. Both discussed the situation for some time and

then the cow-elephant returned to the old elephant.

She woke him up and said, "Let us play a game. How sweet is this moonlit night!"

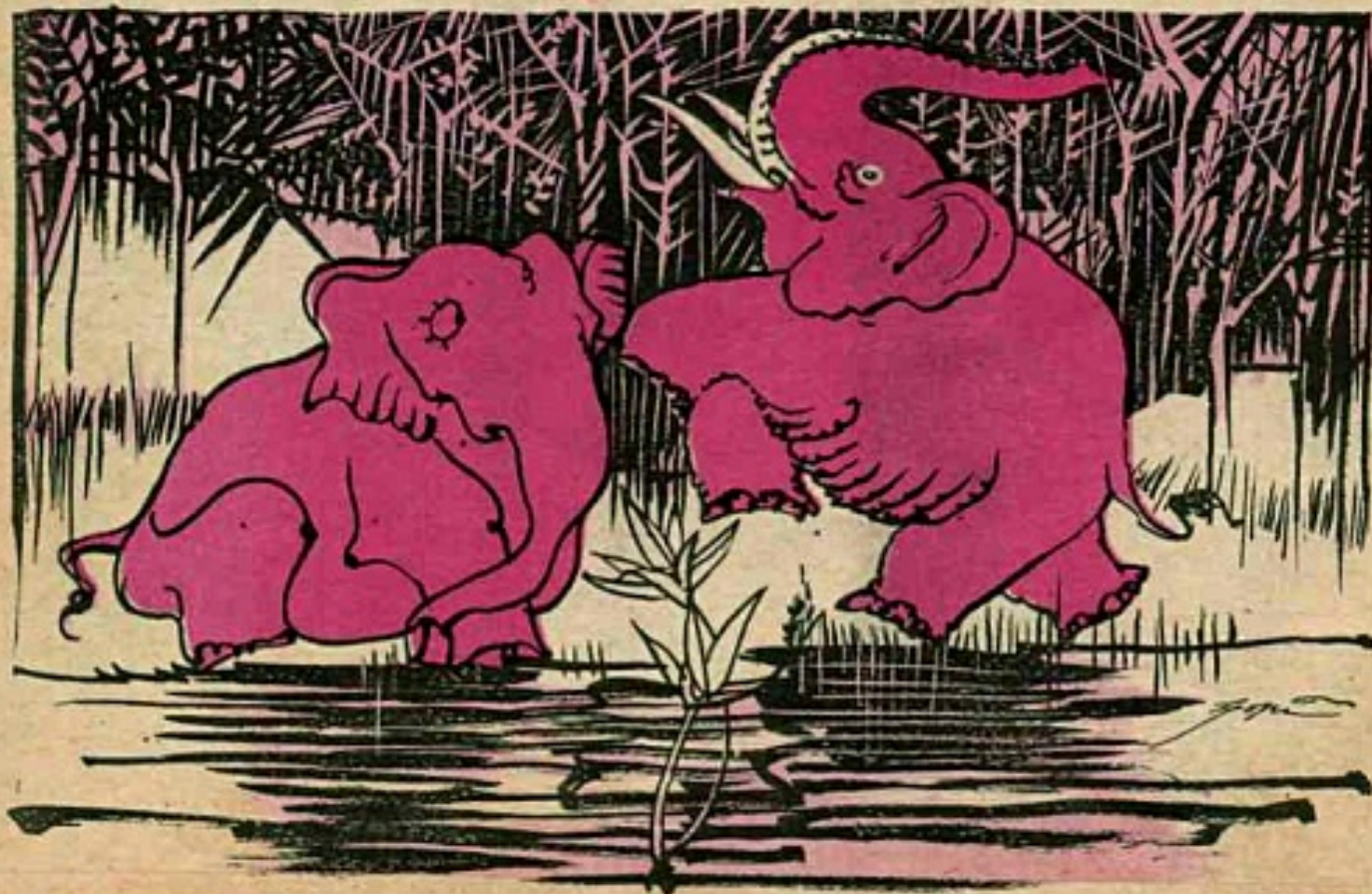
The old elephant, though tired, did not like to disappoint his would-be wife. He stood up and asked her what game she would like to play.

"Let us have a stroll. Let me see how green is your valley!" she said.

The old elephant was happy to guide her through the valley, while the horde lay asleep.

The two went near a lake at the foot of the hill.

"In my land the bride and



bridegroom, before their marriage, play a game in the lake. Both duck in the water. One who can remain longer, wins," said the cow-elephant.

"If that is the custom, we can also play the game," said the old elephant.

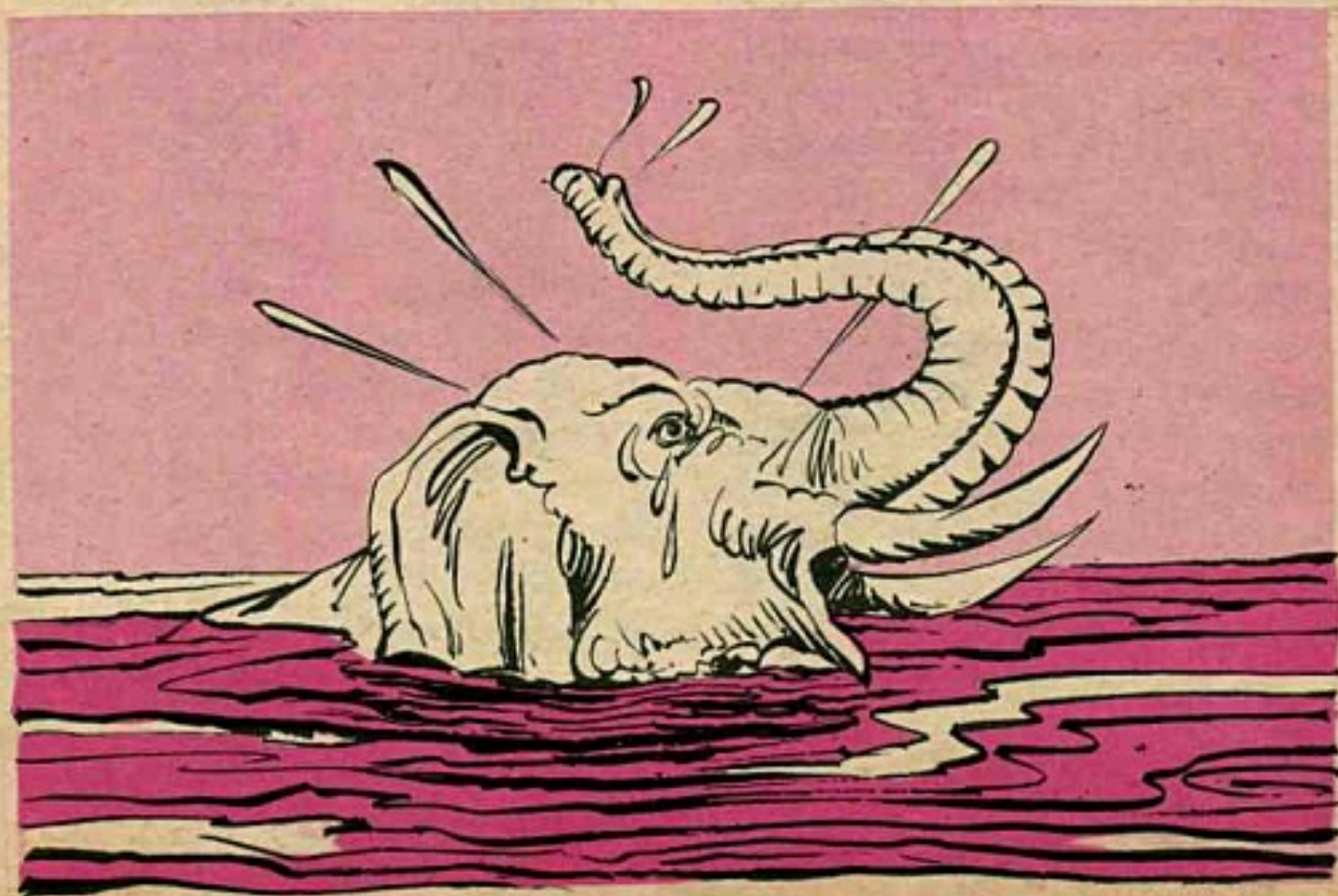
Both entered the lake and went under water. The cow-elephant came out in a minute and ran towards the hill where her mate was waiting. Both crossed to the other side as fast as possible.

The old elephant remained under water for some time. Then he raised his head, but did not see the bride elephant.

He concluded that she was still under the water. Not to lose the game, he went under the water again. Minutes later he raised his head only to marvel at the endurance of his bride! He ducked again, not to be outdone.

A long time passed. The old elephant could no more bear the pressure of the game. He came ashore and lay on the bank, exhausted.

In the morning when his followers reached there in search of him, he was about to die. By then the young couple was far away, happily heading towards their home.





**STORIES FROM
CHILDREN'S CLASSICS**

MARVELLOUS TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

Who knew that the jolly good German gentleman, Baron Munchausen (pronounced Monk-how-sen), who set off on a journey to Russia, one winter, will have so many adventures!

It was a desolate evening. The tired baron's eyes could see nothing but snow. However, something good enough to tie his horse to, was sticking out of the snow. Too tired to gallop farther, he fastened his horse to it and aprawled on the snow and fell asleep.

He slept rather well. It was the buzzing of human voices that woke him up in the morning. Fluttering his eyes open,

he was amazed to find that what was a desolate meadow the night before had become a busy village.

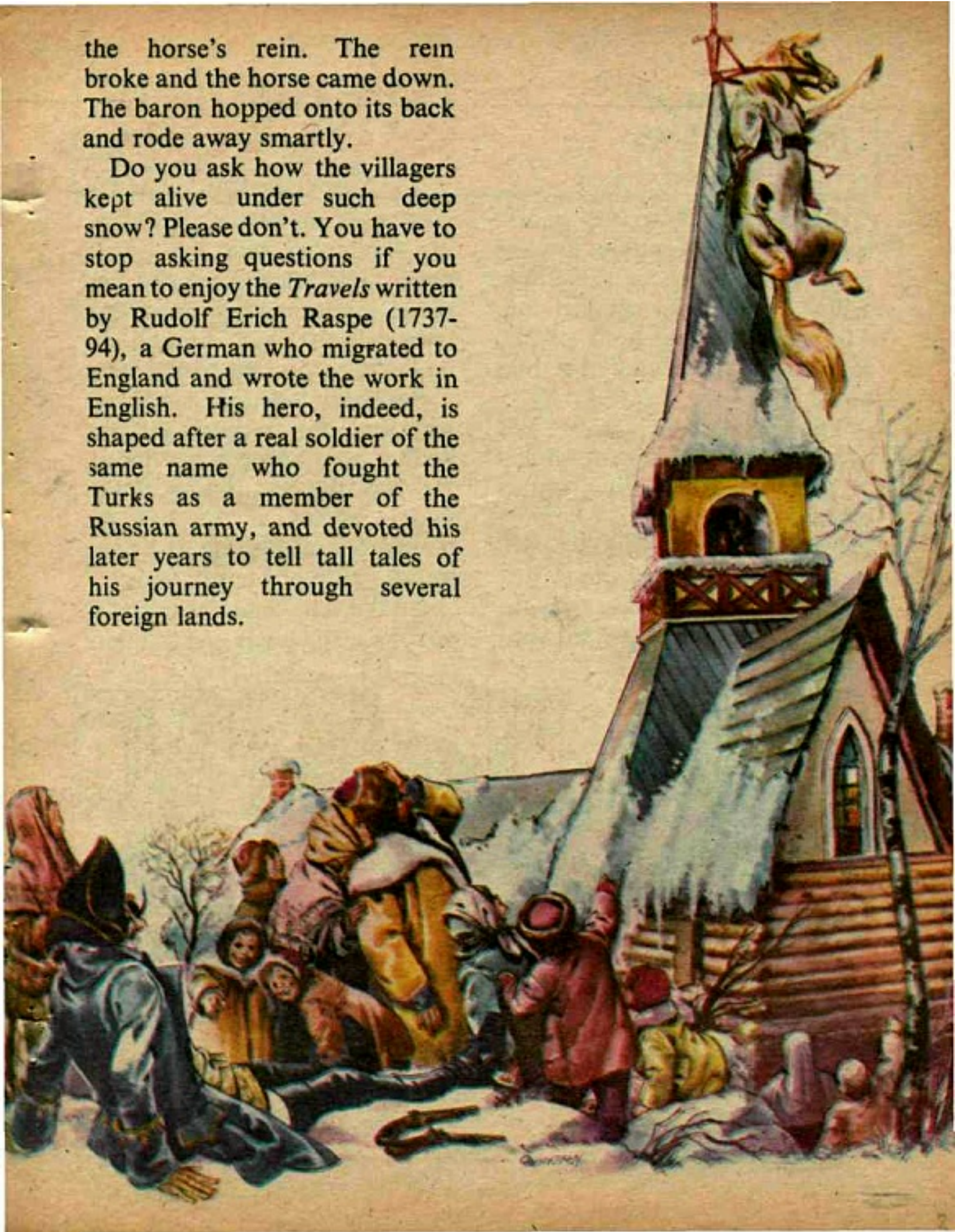
Someone commented that the traveller had his stable in the sky! Intrigued, the baron looked for his horse and found it hanging from the cross atop the village church!

By and by he realised the situation. Last evening the whole village excepting the cross on the church lay buried under snow. As the snow had slowly melted away, he, still asleep, had come lower and lower till he had touched the road; but being fastened to the cross, the horse continued to hang from it.

But the baron had a keen presence of mind. He shot at

the horse's rein. The rein broke and the horse came down. The baron hopped onto its back and rode away smartly.

Do you ask how the villagers kept alive under such deep snow? Please don't. You have to stop asking questions if you mean to enjoy the *Travels* written by Rudolf Erich Raspe (1737-94), a German who migrated to England and wrote the work in English. His hero, indeed, is shaped after a real soldier of the same name who fought the Turks as a member of the Russian army, and devoted his later years to tell tall tales of his journey through several foreign lands.



"Throw this fellow into gaol!" screamed out a nobly dressed man in the court of the Chola King. The King looked on. The guards took hold of the man concerned and led him away.

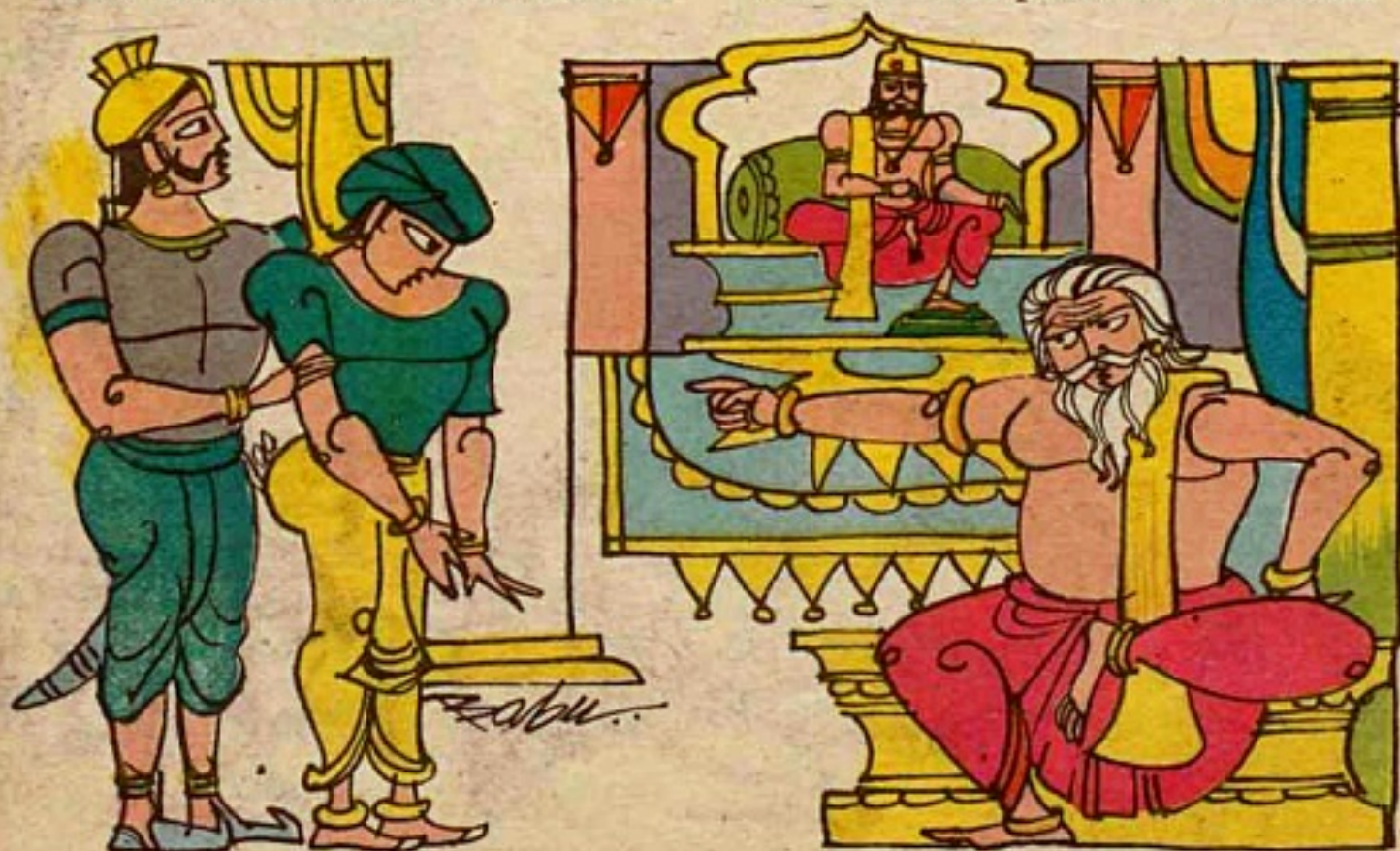
The gentleman who had ordered the punishment smiled at the king. The king smiled back.

Anyone who would have come into the royal court just at that stage would have thought that the man who was led into

gaol must have been a criminal. But far from that, he was a poet. His offence was, he had made a grammatical error in a composition which he had the audacity to present to the king.

But who was the gentleman who sent him to gaol? He was neither a minister nor a judge. He was the court-poet, Ottakootar by name. He had the power to punish those who were found guilty of literary flaws!

Ottakootar had become a terror for the poets and scholars



of the land. However, his unkind authority did not last long. A new poet was coming up, a poet at once courageous and clever.

He was Kamban. He made novel innovations in poetry. He broke the conventions at his sweet will, of course, for the sake of new and more valuable principles.

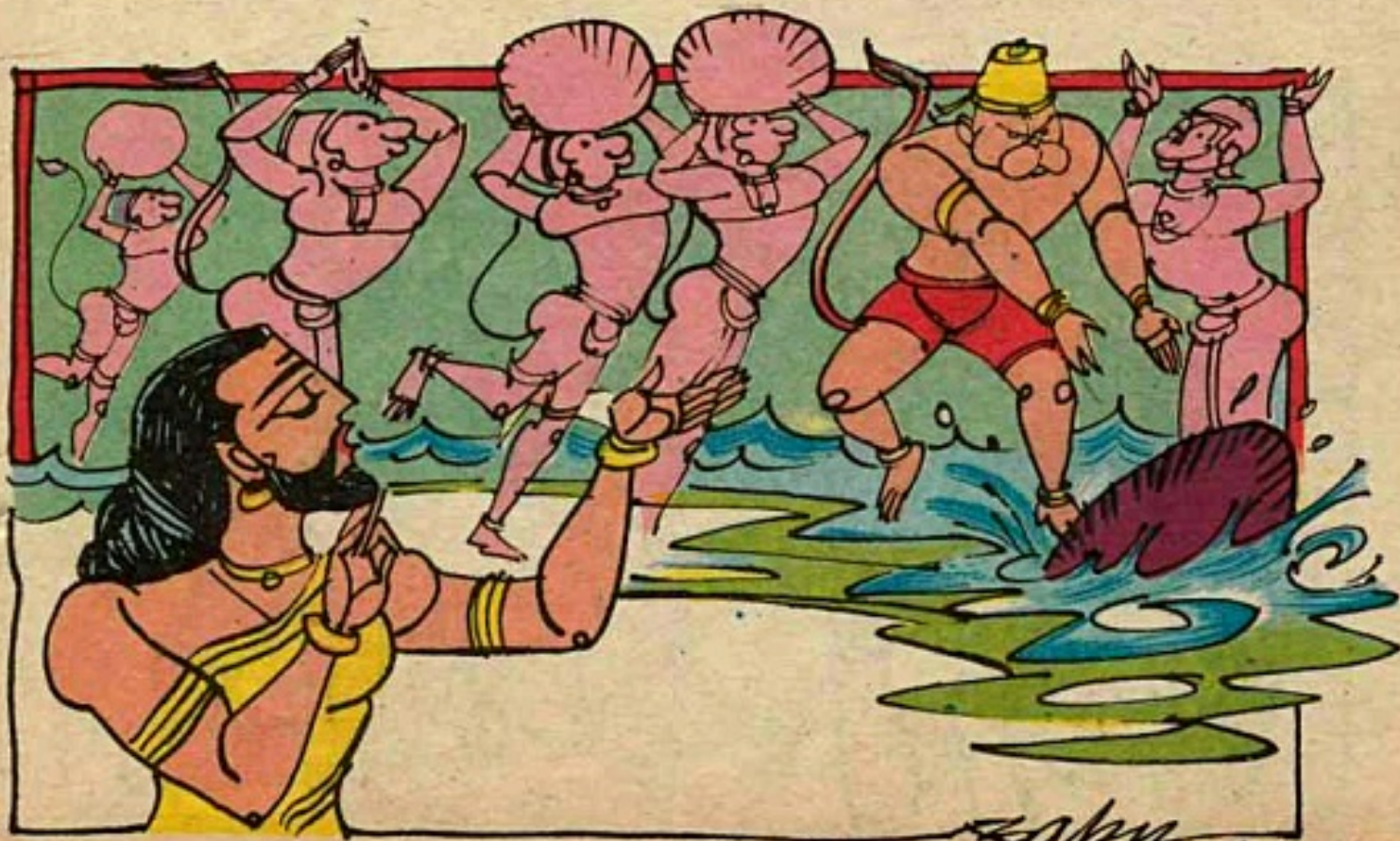
With Kamban's arrival in the king's court so many arguments must have taken place between the two poets. If Ottakootar could not punish Kamban, it was because the latter had won the hearts of the king and the courtiers, by his genius.

This was over a thousand years ago.

Valmiki's *Ramayana* was a great source of inspiration for poets and playwrights. One day the king asked both Ottakootar and Kamban to take up the story of Rama and give their own poetic renderings to it.

Ottakootar found in this an opportunity to prove his superiority over Kamban. He devoted all his time and talent to the work. He was happy to learn, through his private spies, that Kamban whiled away his time roaming about, or in merry company of friends.

A few months passed. Ottakootar had completed the seventh canto of his version of the *Ramayana*. He reported his progress to the king. Looking



at Kamban, the king asked, "What about you?"

"I too am working on it, at the same pace, my lord," replied Kamban.

"This is not so, my lord," blurted out Ottakootar, eager to give Kamban the lie. "Recite a passage from what you have written," he challenged.

Kamban lost no time in beginning to recite a most melodious verse depicting the monkeys at work constructing the bridge to Lanka. The king was thrilled at the recitation. Ottakootar looked crestfallen.

Back at home, Ottakootar began destroying his own work

on the *Ramayana*. He had destroyed all but the last canto when Kamban reached his house. It was at Kamban's intervention that the last canto was saved. Kamban promised to add it to his own version of the *Ramayana*.

There are several such legends about Kamban who gave a grand new turn to Tamil poetry. He was born at Tiruvalundur of Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, perhaps in 11th century. There are many who think that he belonged to a still earlier era—to 9th century.

The genius of Kamban is not assailed by time. He is still as modern as he was hundreds of years ago.





STORY OF INDIA—31

THE BOY WHO RESCUED HIS FATHER

It was a quiet dawn. Kohoda, a sage, was returning to his hut, after a bath in the nearby river, chanting a Vedic hymn. Suddenly he was surprised by a tender voice repeating what he recited.

'It seems, someone is trying to correct my chanting. Whoever he be, he is a crooked fellow. Let him look crooked too,' said the sage. The sage's wife stood horrified.



The voice that corrected the sage came from the child which was still in the womb of the sage's wife. As the sage's words became a curse, the child was born with eight bends in his body. He was called Astavakra.



But before his son's birth, Kohoda had proceeded to the court of King Janaka. Now, Janaka had a renowned scholar in his court named Vandi. Kohoda challenged Vandi to an argument, but got defeated.

According to the condition, whoever was defeated by Vandi was to be taken to some unknown destination. Some said the defeated scholars were thrown into the river. Others said they were kept prisoners on an island.



Years passed. Astavakra was now a young boy. But young though he was, his genius shone bright. Grown-up scholars and seekers visited him to hear him explain the Vedas.

Astavakra, however, was sad on account of his father's condition. "Mother, please allow me to meet Vandi and challenge him to argue with me!" insisted the boy. The loving mother had to let the boy go.



In King Janaka's court, all were amazed at the little Astavakra throwing a challenge at the renowned scholar, Vandi. He demanded that if Vandi is defeated, Kohoda and all other defeated scholars must be set at liberty.

Astavakra defeated Vandi. Only then it was disclosed that Kohoda and other defeated scholars were employed to perform a Yajna on an island. Vandi had arranged for it in order to satisfy his father.





The Yajna had just been completed. Kohoda and others were brought back from the island. Kohoda saw his son for the first time. He rejoiced at it. Also, he repented for his curse.

Kohoda taught Astavakra a certain hymn and asked him to take a dip, while reciting the hymn, in the river Samanga. Samanga meant harmony and the river restored the lost harmony of Astavakra's body.



Astavakra emerged from the water a handsome boy—in possession of a perfect body. Father and son returned home. In due course Astavakra became a great sage and author of a *Samhita*.

The Bird on the High Hills

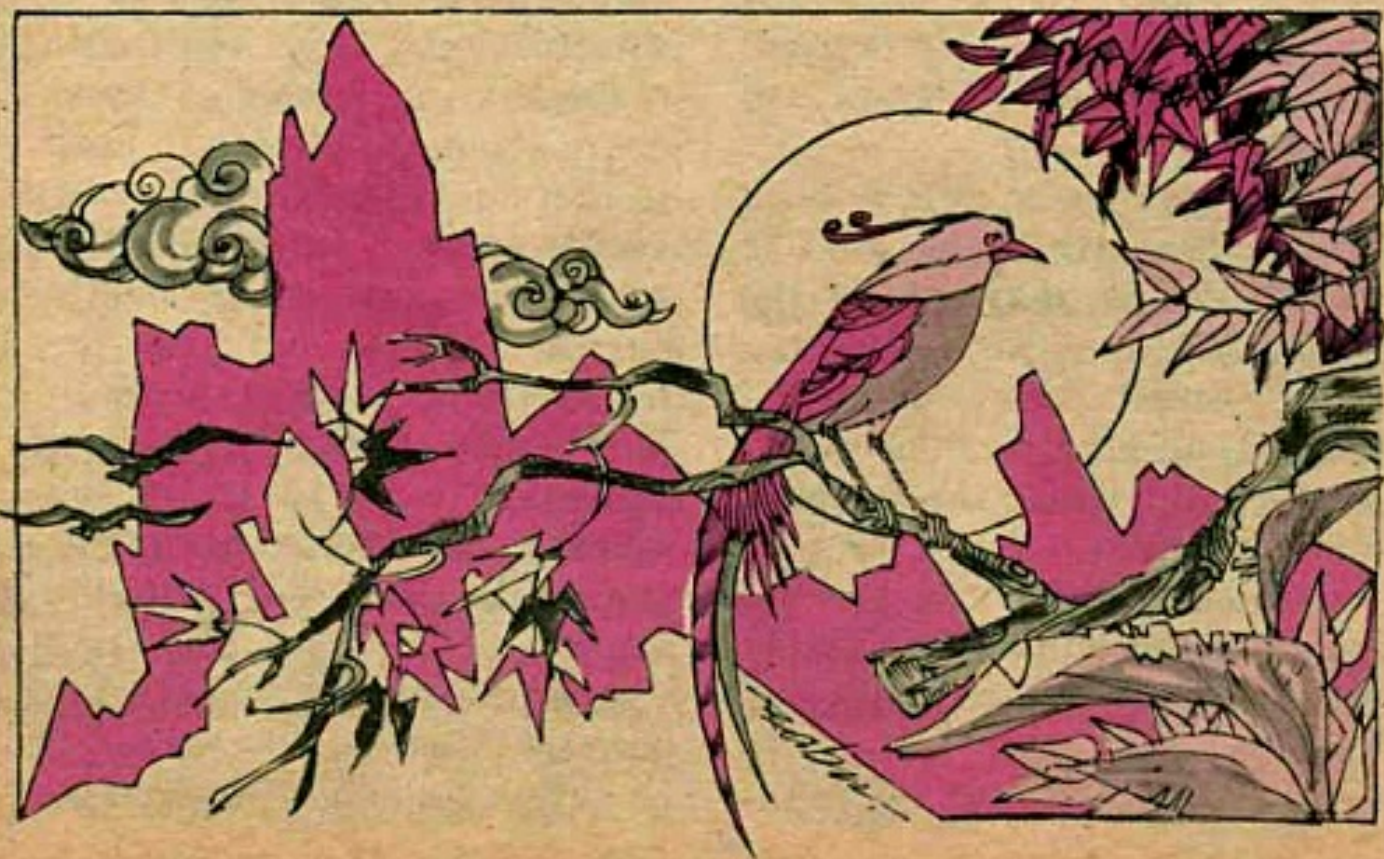
In a forest of pine trees atop the Hangi hills dwelt a wonderful bird. Merchants, king's officers and travellers who passed through the forest were charmed to hear the bird singing. There was some magic in the bird's voice which kept a listener happy for days together.

The king of the land heard about the strange bird. He said, "Only if I could get it, I could live a happier life."

Those who heard the king

express such a desire were sure of a handsome reward only if they could capture the bird for the king. Some of them went atop the hills and passed a long time looking for the bird. But they could not see even a feather of it. Some fellows who thought themselves clever caught other birds and carried them to the king. They were punished for trying to deceive the king.

Below the hills, in a small hamlet, lived a young man. He





often passed hours on the hills, listening to the bird. He loved it very much. Once in a while the bird flew down and perched on his shoulder! It was so beautiful!

The young man was now in two minds. He knew that he could perhaps take hold of the bird and present it to the king. That would bring him the reward; all his difficulties would be over. But would that be good for the bird?

He climbed the hills and roamed about, thinking deeply whether to look for the bird or not.

Suddenly he heard the fami-

liar sound of the bird. Next, the bird flew down and sat on his shoulder.

"I know what you are thinking. Well, let me narrate to you an incident. If you do not feel sorry at it, I shall go with you. But if you give vent to sorrow, I shall fly away," proposed the bird.

The young man agreed to the condition. The bird then narrated the following story:

Once upon a time there was a hunter who had a dog that was extremely faithful to him. One day, while the hunter and his dog were returning from the forest, they met a trader. His cart, loaded with bags of silver, had stopped because one of its wheels had broken. The trader requested the hunter to stand guard on his wealth for an hour so that he could visit the nearby village and find out someone to repair his cart. The hunter agreed to oblige him. But the trader took a long time to return and the hunter had an important work to do in the evening. He directed his dog to guard the cart and left the scene.

A little later the trader came back. Pleased with the dog, he gave it a chunk of silver. The

dog returned to his master at night, the silver held in its mouth.

On seeing the dog returning with the silver an evil suspicion entered the hunter's mind. He thought that the dog had stolen the silver and run away from its duty. Furious, he beat it to death.

"What a pity! The poor dog was not only innocent, but also so faithful!" commented the young man.

"I see that you feel sorry about the dog. Hence, let me go," said the bird and he flew away.

The young man had come half down the hill. He went up

again, and again the bird hopped down to his shoulder.

"Let me narrate to you yet another incident, on the same condition." And it told the following story:

There was no rain over a land for a whole year. A farmer went out in search of an area where there would be enough water. He roamed about for long and entered a forest. He could hear the sound of a flowing stream. But he was too tired and thirsty to look for it. He sat down in the shadow of a rock for rest.

He saw drops of water falling from the rock overhead. Thinking that some water had stra-



yed from the main stream, he collected the drops in a leaf. But, just as he would drink from the leaf, a little bird made a dive towards it and toppled the leaf along with its content.

The farmer flew into a rage. He hit the bird with a stone, killing it at once.

Then he found the stream and quenched his thirst. But as his eyes went to the top of the rock, he saw a terrible snake lying there. What he thought to be drops of water were drops of poison overflowing the snake's fang.

"How sad that he killed the bird which saved his life!" ex-


claimed the young man.

The bird on his shoulder tittered and said, "Now, you see, that we beasts and birds are never properly understood by the human beings. They treat us cruelly at the slightest pretext. Do you still want me to live in the king's court? Won't you rather have me sing to you and other travellers at my free will?"

"Yes, yes, please continue to be here in the forest. Your friendship is my greatest reward. I want no prize from the king," said the young man.

The bird flew away into the green woods and sang for a long time.





New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire

STRANGE CASE OF A HUMAN GIANT

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. Lightning dazzled the region from time to time, revealing ghastly faces. Rumble of thunder was interspersed with the moaning howl of jackals.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the tree and brought the corpse down.

However, as soon as he began walking through the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I know not a second man who relishes the company of a vampire. But I know of a princess who loved someone who was not a human being. Let me narrate that account to you. That may give you some relief."

The vampire went on: In days gone by, adjacent to the forest, Dandakaranya, there was a kingdom called Shobhapur. The king of the land was



a good-natured man and his subjects led a happy life.

One morning a handsome young man greeted the king in his court and said, "My lord, my name is Sanjiv. I have come from a far away place with the intention of serving you. If you employ me in your service, I shall do my best to satisfy you."

There was something unusually charming about the young man. The king took a liking for him. He appointed him to the post of an officer in charge of the management of the castle.

In a short time Sanjiv proved himself perfectly worthy of his

position. Once while bathing in a lake behind the palace, the princess was in danger of getting drowned. Her maids screamed. Sanjiv jumped into the water and rescued the princess with ease.

Another time an elephant turned mad and killed its mahout. Thereafter it rushed at the queen who was enjoying a stroll in the garden. Those around looked on with horror, unable to do anything. But Sanjiv sprang forward and took hold of the elephant's tusks and pushed it into a ditch.

This was a great feat. It is doubtful if anybody else could have done such a thing. Needless to say, the king, the queen, the princess and all the inmates of the palace were all praise for Sanjiv.

Two years passed. Suddenly an unforeseen danger befell Shobhapur. A powerful king of another land came to attack the kingdom. He camped in the outskirts of Shobhapur with a large army and sent a message to the king of Shobhapur asking him to surrender.

The king of Shobhapur who was unprepared to face such a situation decided to surrender. But Sanjiv requested the king

to wait and inform the people of Shobhapur to remain inside their homes after the sunset. The king passed order accordingly.

When it was evening, Sanjiv came out to the open, alone. There was nobody to watch him. In the twinkling of an eye he grew into a huge being, as high as a palm tree. His eyes spat fire and his mouth gave out smoke. He ran towards the enemy in long strides.

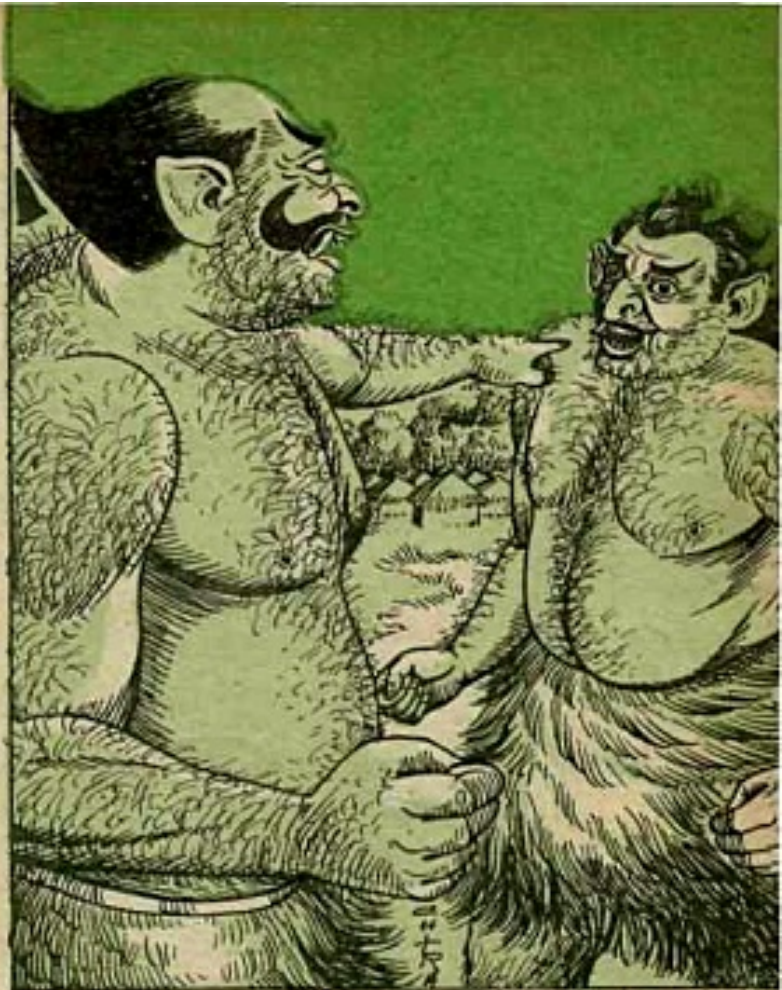
The enemy soldiers had never had an experience like that. They ran for their life, leaving their arms and utensils behind.

Sanjiv laughed behind them that scared them even more. They ran and ran without looking back.

Sanjiv returned to human form before anybody had the chance to know that he was a demon who had assumed a human form.

There was great joy in Shobhapur. The queen proposed that the princess be married to Sanjiv. The princess herself smilingly approved of the proposal. So did the king.

But before the marriage had been solemnised, a new danger threatened the frontier of the



kingdom. A horde of giants attacked the innocent villagers at night. They carried the human beings into the forest and ate them up.

"Let me tackle the problem," said Sanjiv. He then proceeded to the frontier. At night he saw a giant entering the village. He assumed his original giant form and challenged the intruder.

"You! Are you not our brother Vajradanta?" asked the surprised intruder.

"Yes. But I say, you leave the human beings in peace," said Sanjiv who was really Vajradanta.



"But where were you all these days?" asked the other giant.

"I don't like the life of a giant. That is why I silently broke away from our tribe and am living as a human being," replied Sanjiv.

"You are a shame for us," shouted the intruder as he slapped Sanjiv. At once Sanjiv returned the slap with greater fury. The intruder fell dead. Sanjiv then ran around the place and attacked the other giants as well. While the other giants were only strong, Sanjiv was strong as well as clever. He had learnt the techniques of wrestling and fighting from the

human soldiers at Shobhapur. That is why he could kill or maim the giants easily.

This was a great insult to the chief of the giants whose name was Brihodar. He assumed the form of a mendicant and met the king and said, "O king, I am happy that you have defeated the giants who harassed your subjects. But I warn you against one of them who has assumed a human form and is living amidst you!"

"Who is he?" asked the king in surprise.

"I shall show you who he is," said Brihodar and he chanted a hymn by the effect of which Sanjiv turned into the giant that he was.

Sanjiv was alone in his room at that time. He understood that Brihodar had done the mischief. He rushed into the court and killed Brihodar at once. Then he ran away. Brihodar fell dead, but not before returning to his giant form.

Nobody knew who was the giant who killed the mendicant who also proved to be a giant. All looked stunned.

Sanjiv returned to the palace at midnight. He met the king privately and confessed that he was a giant. He said, "My lord,

I am sorry that I agreed to marry the princess although I am not a human being. Please pardon me. Let me go away."

The king looked pensive. He asked him to wait and told the queen and the princess who Sanjiv really was.

The queen did not know what to say. But the princess said, "Father! I have decided to marry him. If you do not allow me to do so, I would remain unmarried."

The king raised no objection. He informed Sanjiv the decision of the princess. The marriage was performed with great pomp. All were happy.

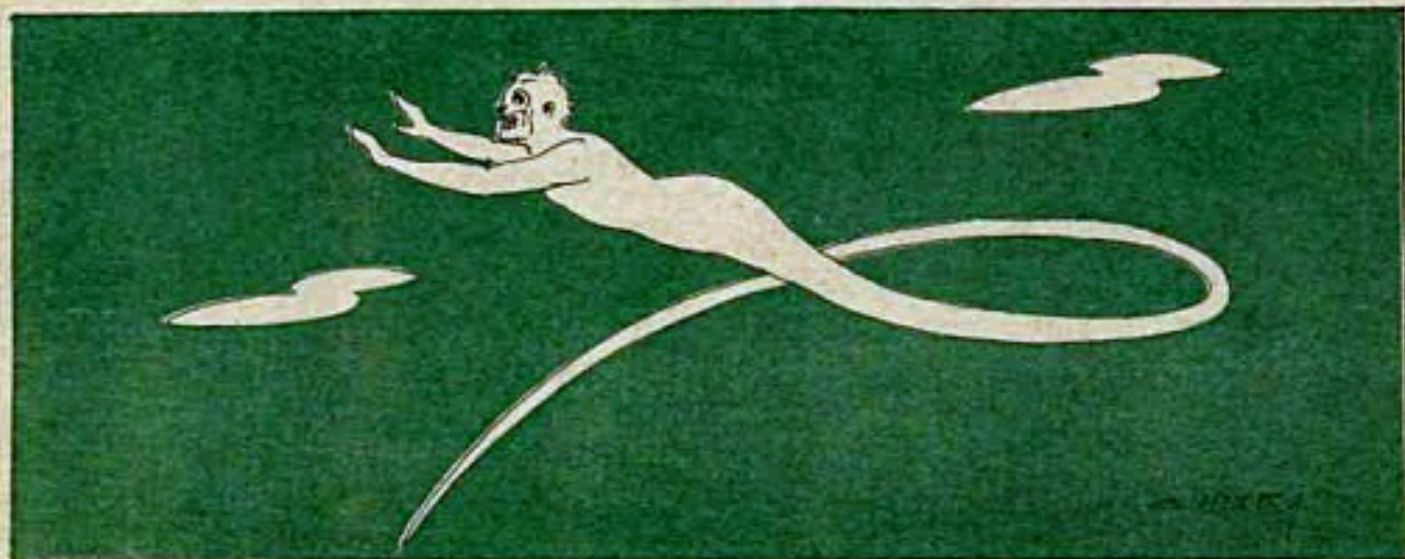
The vampire paused and asked Vikram in a challenging tone, "O king, how could the princess choose to marry a giant? How could the king agree to such a marriage? Ans-

wer my questions if you can. If you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Answered the king, "The princess knew that although Sanjiv was a giant by birth, by nature, he was far nobler than the human beings. Impressed by his courage, she loved him. She remained faithful to her love. Evidently, she too was noble by nature.

"The king had no reason to object to the marriage. First of all, nobody except he, his queen, and the princess, knew that Sanjiv was a giant. Secondly, Sanjiv was a great source of strength for him."

As soon as the king finished answering, the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





A Folktale from China

The Mister's Last Advice

In days gone by there was an old man who lived by the side of a forest. He had nobody in the world but a young grandson.

"Money is life. If you have money enough, you have everything," the old man told the young man from time to time.

"We have money enough, haven't we?" the young man asked in his turn.

"It is foolish to think that we have enough. We must have more," the old man said. "More money would make life more meaningful."

And soon they had more. This is how it happened: In

the forest lived a gang of bandits. Over the years they had looted many homes. They had their loot stored in a cave. Once the king's soldiers attacked the gang. There was a fight. The soldiers killed each member of the gang before leaving the forest. But they never cared to search for the loot.

The old man led his grandson into the forest and searched for the gang's wealth. They found the cave in which the wealth was stored and prepared to carry it home. But the old man saw a coin lying a few yards away from the cave. He

hastened to pick it up.

"There may be more coins scattered farther in the forest," he said, beckoning his grandson to follow him.

"Let's not go any deeper into the forest," warned the grandson.

"But we may find more coins, you blockhead!" shouted back the old man and he marched forward.

Suddenly a tiger pounced upon him and began dragging him away. The alert grandson raised his axe and rushed at the beast. He saw that the old man was not wounded. The tiger held him by his shirt.

The young man ran and ran

and overtook the tiger. He was just going to strike the tiger on the head when the old man shouted, "Mind your blow, fellow. The skin of this tiger should fetch us a handful of silver coins. Take care not to disfigure the skin while killing the tiger."

The young man stopped in order to think how to kill the tiger without spoiling its skin. The tiger took an abrupt turn and disappeared into the dense forest.

"I wish, your last advice had been more prudent!" murmured the young man. But his grandfather was nowhere to hear his lament.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Dhaniram and Jagatram were neighbours. Dhaniram was very rich; Jagatram was poor.

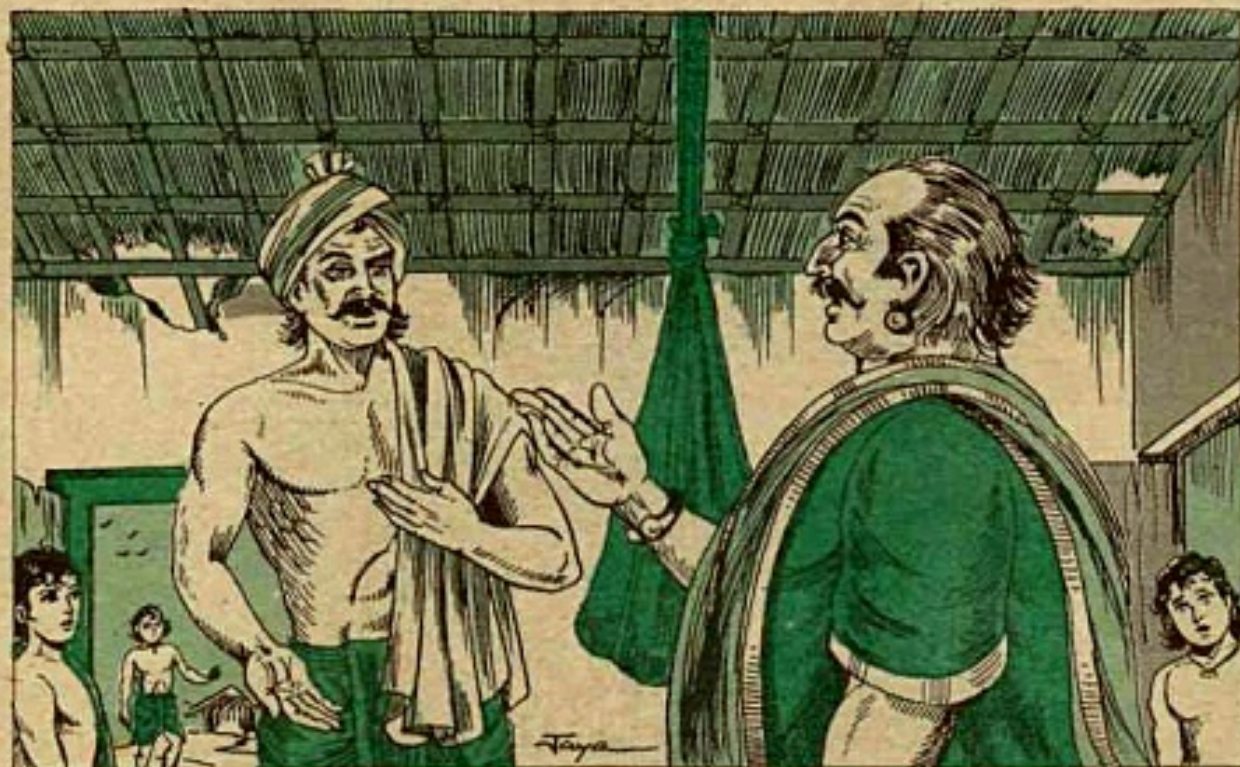
The poor Jagatram had four sons while the rich Dhaniram had none. All the four sons of Jagatram seemed equally good. Dhaniram decided to adopt one of them.

"My friend, I'm pleased to tell you that I've decided to adopt one of your sons," Dhaniram informed his neighbour.

Jagatram kept quiet.

"Don't you wish one of your sons to avail of the opportunity?" asked Dhaniram, quite surprised.

"Please don't misunderstand me. I don't wish one of them to be deprived of the opportunity to struggle and prosper in life. Besides, is it wise on my part to leave one of them rich and the other three poor? I love them equally. I shall strive to give them equal opportunities and leave each to his destiny," said Jagatram.





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

King Himavan sent numerous messages inviting gods, sages and kings to attend the marriage of his daughter, Parvati, with Shiva. The invitees, even before their arrival, began sending their gifts. The castle of King Himavan at Oushadhipur overflowed with precious and rare presents such as a variety of jewels, heaps of sandalwood, fragrant roots of many kinds and beautiful horses and elephants.

The mountain region grew festive. It hummed with activities. The architects of the gods, Viswakarma, himself supervised the construction of the magnificent dais that was to serve as the marriage platform.

Shiva told the wind that he would like to see the sage Narada. The wind blew forth and whispered the summon to

Narada. At once Narada hurried to Kailash and bowed to Shiva and asked, "What is your order for me, Lord?"

"You must have heard, Narada, that I am to marry Parvati, the daughter of King Himavan, on the fifth day from today. You can travel through the air at great speed. Please convey my warm invitation to all our friends in the three spheres. Also, tell Kubera to arrange for all the articles necessary for the occasion."

Narada passed from sphere to sphere as fast as a string of lightning and informed all concerned about the joyful event to take place. Kubera lost no time in preparing nine auspicious symbols to be used in the ceremony.

When Narada returned to



Kailash along with Kubera, the place had already begun to be crowded with gods and sages. In due course there arrived Brahma and Vishnu, followed by Indra, the King of the gods. Nandi and the Rudras were busy receiving them and looking to their comfort. Shiva himself accorded the guests a warm welcome.

It was decided that Brahma, assisted by Vishnu, Indra and some other gods and sages would perform the duty of the priest in solemnising the marriage. Brihaspati, the traditional priest of the gods, fixed the auspicious moment when, with the pres-

cribed rituals, Shiva would be declared a bridegroom. Garuda, the Gandharvas, the Yakshinis, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Sachi, Arundhati etc. bedecked Shiva with garlands and sandalwood-paste and prepared him for the occasion. Shiva sat before the images of the Nine Grahas and worshipped them.

Thereafter Brahma gave the signal for the procession to start for Oushadhipur. Virbhadr, Bhadrakali, and the Rudras, began sounding a number of instruments. Dancing and singing, they marched before Airavat, the elephant of heaven, upon which sat Shiva. Others joined the procession in a variety of decorated vehicles. Goddesses and the wives of the sages rode the flying chariots.

As the procession approached Oushadhipur, King Himavan and Queen Menaka, accompanied by their sons and their priest, Garga, came forward to receive the party. They bowed to Brahma, Vishnu and the others and then Himavan stood before Shiva with folded hands and said, "O God of Gods, it is most kind of you to condescend to marry my daughter. We are honoured. My dynasty stands glorified."

He then presented Shiva with new clothes, sprinkled on him scented water and poured flowers on his head.

Shiva looked serene and supremely beautiful. The crowds gazed on him, enchanted.

The king and the queen flanked Shiva and slowly led him into their castle amidst songs of the Gundharvas. The rites for receiving the bridegroom were duly performed.

Parvati, seated in her palanquin, visited the temple of Goddess Ambika close to the castle. Members of the bridegroom's party who had had glimpses of her, at once realised that she was Divine! To see her was bliss.

The moment for the main ceremony arrived. Shiva and Parvati sat on the specially erected platform. Amidst the chan-

ting of hymns interspersed by sweet music, the marriage was performed. Never had the Himalayas witnessed such a happy event. It was a refreshing dawn when the ceremony was over.

The region continued to be festive even after the event for days together. By and by the guests took leave of their regal hosts. Shiva too thought that it was time for him to return to his abode at Kailash. On his behalf Nandi broached the proposal to Himavan.

No parents would like to part with a daughter like Parvati and a son-in-law like Shiva. But all had to reconcile with the unavoidable, after all.

King Himavan and Queen Menaka reluctantly agreed to Shiva and Parvati departing to Kailash. On an auspicious day the couple left for home.





A Tale from Burma

SPEECH AND FORTUNE

There was a young scholar who wished to marry his teacher's beautiful daughter.

"Sir, I shall be pleased to marry your daughter," he told the teacher.

The teacher frowned upon him and said, "Come back when you have learnt to speak properly. Only then I shall care to consider your proposal."

The scholar felt so much humiliated that he decided to end his life. But he was very poor. 'If I die, nobody would even care to carry my body to a good cemetery. They may throw it away at some nasty place. Better I walk to the most ideal cemetery myself and die there.

Those who look after the cemetery would give me a decent burial, when they find my body', he thought.

It was midnight when he reached the cemetery of his choice. He was thinking how to put an end to his life when what should he see but two ogres appearing before him.

"We have a dispute. I say that the winter is more uncomfortable than the summer. My friend, this good ogre, insists that it is summer which is more uncomfortable than the winter. As you can see, we ogres don't have human skins to feel the effects of seasons. You tell us which of us is right," said one

of the ogres.

The scholar thought for a moment and said, "Both of you are wrong, for, neither the winter is more uncomfortable than the summer nor is the summer more uncomfortable than the winter. Both the seasons are equally uncomfortable."

The ogres frowned on him and turned to go. Suddenly the teacher's remark returned to the scholar's mind. "Please wait," he shouted.

When the ogres returned to him, he said, "I beg your pardon. Both of you are right, for the winter is as uncomfortable as the summer."

"Thanks. Here is your fee for the kind judgment," said

the ogres, whipping up a jar of gold.

The scholar gave up his plan for ending his life and walked back to the teacher's house.

"Sir, will you be pleased to marry your daughter to me?" he said, bowing to his teacher, early in the morning.

"I shall be pleased to consider your proposal. But how do you plan to run your family?" asked the teacher.

The scholar quietly removed the lid off the jar. The teacher had a hurried look into it.

"I have considered the proposal well, my boy. You can marry my daughter," he announced happily.





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

VIRTUES OF A PRINCE

Many centuries ago, Varanasi was ruled by a pious king named Brahmadruta. The Buddha, in one of his earlier incarnations, was born as his first son. He was called Brahmadrutakumar.

After his father's death Brahmadrutakumar ascended the throne. The young king led a highly disciplined life dividing his time between taking care of the state on one hand and study and meditation on the other hand.

The young king's pure life and deep regard for truth had a great impact on the administration. The subjects were inspired to lead a just life. Judges and magistrates passed their time idly, for, there were no cases before them. The police

too spent their time in helping the aged and the sick. There was no breach of law for them to worry about.

Reports reached King Brahmadrutakumar that people were all praise for him.

"Those who send such reports may be the officers who are seeking my favour. It will be possible to know what the people are really speaking about me only if I move among them," thought the young king.

He donned a disguise and set out in a chariot.

His charioteer was a clever man who took care never to reveal his master's identity.

The young king visited a number of villages and towns. He mingled with crowds and heard their remarks on different issues

with attention. Nowhere he met a man who criticised him.

Satisfied with his journey across his kingdom, he was on his way back to his capital when on a narrow road, his chariot came face to face with the chariot of King Mallik of Koshala.

King Mallik too was a just and able king and he too was returning to his capital after a survey of his kingdom. He too was in disguise.

But now that King Brahmadduttakumar's mission had been over, his charioteer did not think it necessary to hide his identity.

"Give way to us, for the one who rides this chariot is none

other than Brahmadduttakumar, the king of Varanasi," announced the charioteer.

"That's no reason for me to give way to you, for the one who rides this chariot is none other than King Mallik of Koshala," answered the other charioteer.

"Both indeed are great kings. In such a situation one who is older ought to have the privilege of passing first. What is the age of your king?" asked Brahmadduttakumar's charioteer.

The other charioteer's reply showed that both the kings were of the same age.

By and by it was found out that both the kingdoms were



equal in size, the strength of the army of one was equal to that of the other. Both came of equally noble lineage. One was not inferior to the other even in wealth and education.

The charioteer of Brahma-duttakumar thought for a while and then said, "Let us then see who between the two kings is superior to the other in virtues. Can you tell me how virtuous is your king?"

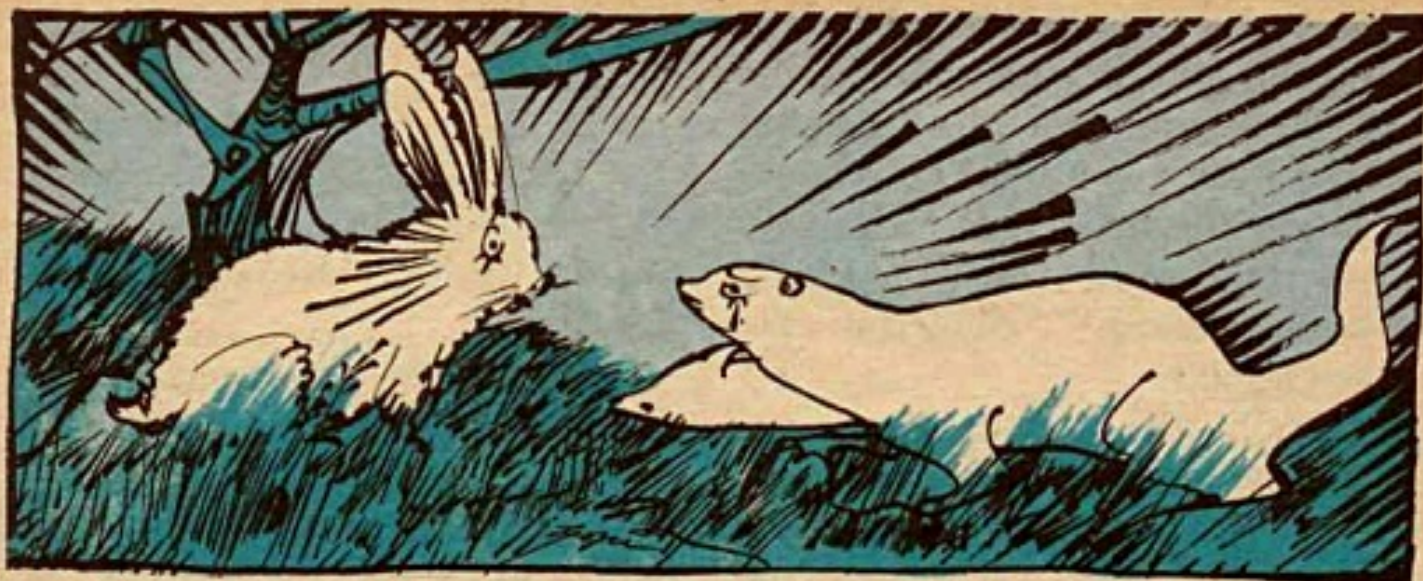
"Noble and just is my king, for he is always kind and honest towards those who are kind and honest. He is rude towards those who are rude. He believes in tit for tat," replied King Mallik's charioteer.

"Is that all?" wondered King Brahma-duttakumar's charioteer. "I'm afraid, you are mistaking some defects for virtues. My king conquers the angry and agitated with his calm, he is kind and honest towards even the most unkind and dishonest. With generosity he opens the eyes of the mean and the miser. With truth he conquers falsehood."

The King of Koshala who was intently listening to the dialogue between the two charioteers jumped down and bowed to King Brahma-duttakumar. His charioteer did the same. Bodhisattva blessed them and resumed his journey.

From the Buddha Jatakas





A Folktale from Malaysia

WHO KILLED THE LITTLE OTTER?

In a small forest lived a community of small creatures. They lived rather happily.

A narrow river flowed by the forest. On its bank stood an old banian tree. An otter lived in a hollow at its foot. So did a rabbit in another hollow.

The otter had a young child who had just learnt to come out of the hollow and toddle around the tree.

One day the otter was away and its child was playing under the tree. Suddenly the rabbit began dancing. So wild was its dance that it did not notice when it trampled the infant otter under its feet. The infant was dead.

Shortly the otter returned. It was in a wild rage when it saw its child dead.

"You killed my young!" the otter accused the rabbit.

"I am sorry, but I hardly know of what I did," explained the rabbit.

But that did not satisfy the otter. It called the rabbit all sorts of names and reported the incident to the forest-god.

The forest-god, invisible to all, lived in the oldest tree of the forest. When he spoke, it appeared as if the tree spoke.

The forest-god summoned the rabbit and asked, "What's this I hear? How could you kill the little otter?"

"I didn't kill it intentionally. I just couldn't help dancing because the woodpecker sounded the battle-drum," replied the rabbit.

"I remember that the rabbit

is our chief war-dancer. He has to dance when the battle-drum is sounded. But I wonder why the woodpecker should sound the drum. It is he who is responsible for the little otter's death," observed the forest-god.

Soon the woodpecker was summoned and asked why he played the drum.

"It was because I saw the mongoose wearing his sword," said the woodpecker.

"Of course, it was natural for the woodpecker to beat the drum if the mongoose wore his sword. The responsibility for the little otter's death lies not with the woodpecker but with the mongoose," said the forest-god and he summoned the mongoose.

"I wore my sword because I found the tortoise putting on

his battle-coat," explained the mongoose.

"Is that so? In that case it is the tortoise who must own up the responsibility for the little otter's death," remarked the forest-god.

The tortoise was summoned.

"I put on the coat when I saw the shrimp raising its lance as if somebody was coming to attack it," stated the tortoise.

The shrimp was duly summoned.

"Why did you raise your lance?" it was asked.

"It was because the otter pounced on my baby," said the shrimp.

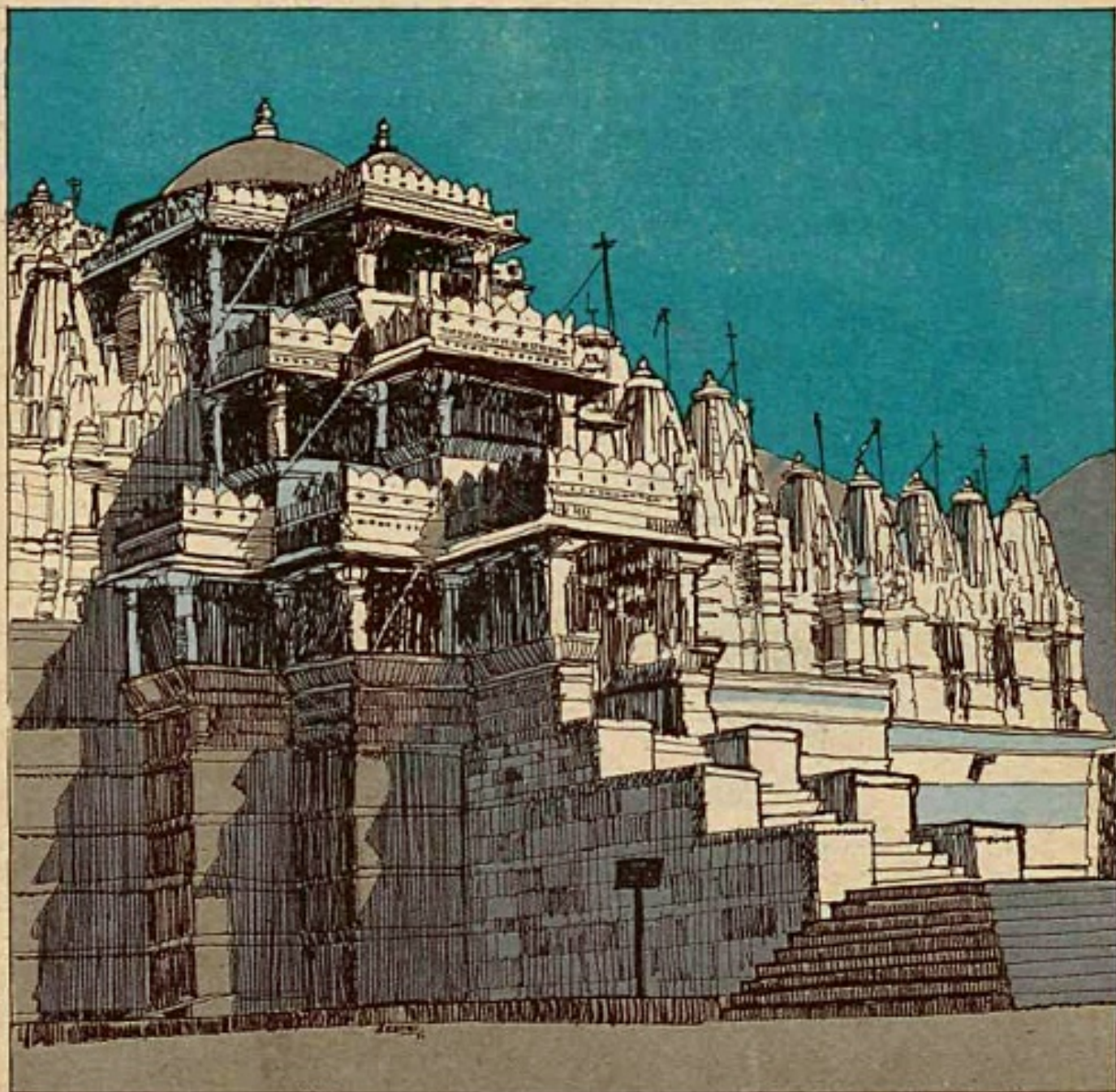
"Now, dear otter, you ought to understand who is responsible for the death of the little otter!" observed the forest-god.

The otter went away without a word more.



THE CHAUMUKHA TEMPLE OF RANAKPUR

Along the western slopes of the Aravalli Hills, at Ranakpur of Rajasthan, are to be seen a number of beautiful Jain temples. The most important among them is Chaumukha (four-faced) temple, dedicated to the first Jain Tirthankar, Lord Adinathji or Rishabhathji. The three-storeyed main temple has four smaller shrines and eighty domes supported by hundreds of pillars, each pillar unique for its engravings.



THE MEANING OF A PROPHECY

In 6th century B.C., Lydia was a prosperous empire and its ruler, Croesus, the richest of all kings.

That was the time when, in Persia, King Cyrus was growing powerful. Croesus wished to check the growth of Cyrus. He consulted the Oracles - stone images through which, it was believed, the voice of Providence could be heard.

The Oracles said that if Croesus marched against the Persians, a great empire would be destroyed,

Inspired, Croesus marched against the Persians, but was defeated. The angry Persians chased him into his own country, destroying much of it, and took him prisoner.

It was perhaps too late for Croesus to realise that what the Oracles said could mean the destruction of his own empire !





How did religion originate and why the wide-spread diversity?

Mrs. R. F. Rebello, Kakinada.

There are many theories about the origin of religion. However, they fall into two broad categories. The basic thesis of one category is, religion was born out of the ignorant awe and wonder with which the primitive man looked at Nature and the universe. While a storm, a fire, an earthquake, terrified him, the mighty sun, the twinkling stars, the beautiful flowers charmed him. He imagined the presence of deities behind such phenomena and tried to please them. Out of this effort at pleasing them was born the practice of worship.

The other thesis is, religion was born out of man's innate knowledge, conscious in some, unconscious in most, that there is a lofty power at the origin of the creation and it is possible to communicate with that power. It is that power which has given man the sense of good and evil and the urge to follow what is good, rejecting the temptation for evil. Great souls realise such spiritual truths and give them to their followers. Man, in course of time, often forgets or distorts the truth or reduces it to a set of rituals or a creed. Thus, religion as an institution might be far removed from spirituality.

Diversity is the law of nature. Just as one can enjoy aesthetic joy through listening to a song or reading a poem, through enjoying a painting or appreciating a sculpture, man can have spiritual experience through many paths – provided he is really aspiring for it.

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backload of questions.)

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. C. K. Satyaram



Mr. A. L. Syed

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for the May '79 goes to :
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The winning Entry : 'The Ring That Matters'
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PICKS FROM
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Dear Sir,

I am following the serial, *The Prince and the Wizard*, with great interest and delight. I hope you will give us an equally interesting serial when this one will come to an end.

— B. S. Ramachandra, Guntakal:

We shall surely try to honour your suggestion.

— Publisher

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